

Equity and Transportation Technology

What is equity?

[Executive Order 13985](#), “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government,” defines equity as the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.^{i ii}

How is equity related to transportation technology?

In response to the above-mentioned executive order, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) established an [Equity Action Plan](#), which serves as a foundation for its path towards building a transportation system that works for everyone. The plan aims to consider the full breadth of equity in transportation, and centers around communities that have been underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged by past transportation decisions.

ITS America recognizes that today's transportation systems suffer from historic and ongoing inequities embedded in infrastructure, access, and cost. As the industry/country explores and fulfills the promise of new transportation technologies and digital infrastructure, it must also embrace and support the paradigm shift occurring in the nation, learn from the lessons of the past, and incorporate transportation equity principles into policy, research, and implementation strategies. This must include explicit consideration of technology's effects on those least prepared to use it as well as those who face barriers to adoption, to ensure their safety, access, and mobility are not compromised.

Much like USDOT, ITS America considers work in the equity space to be an initial, critical step in a long journey that will be evolutionary in nature. No one action or resource can sum up the pursuit of transportation equity and justice. It is an active and ongoing endeavor.

Policy recommendations

ITS America's [equity policy](#) includes six recommendations; truncated versions of those can be found below:

1. Increase the federal match up to 100 percent for installation of intelligent transportation systems for vulnerable road users, including vehicle-to-pedestrian (V2P) safety systems, vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) safety systems, pedestrian signals, bicyclist detection signals, way-finding services, and systems serving

persons with low vision, in a federally designated community development zone, including, but not limited to, qualified Opportunity Zones, Empowerment Zones, Promise Zones, or Choice Neighborhoods.

2. Maintain formula-based funding for public transit at 80/20 highway/transit, raise the transit share of transfers from the Treasury's General Fund, double the authorized funding level for the Capital Investment Grants account from the Treasury's General Fund, and provide greater flexibility to public transit systems to use Urban Area Formula Grants – 5307 for operating assistance to fund smart transit technologies.
3. Establish Mobility on Demand as an eligible activity under Urbanized Area Formula Grants – 5307, Formula Grants for Rural Areas – 5311, and Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities – Section 5310, in order to give transit operators increased flexibility for providing high quality service.
4. Establish an FTA program to provide subsidized or free access to transit and transit-integrated Mobility on Demand programs, including bikeshare and scooter share **programs, for** low-income and disadvantaged transit riders in rural and urban federally designated community development zones, including, but not limited to, qualified Opportunity Zones, Empowerment Zones, Promise Zones, or Choice Neighborhoods.
5. Support federal policy requiring Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to include automated safety systems, payment systems, and real-time information with a focus on supporting and expanding equity goals or objectives in **long-range transportation plans (LRTPs)**.
6. Encourage the Secretary of Transportation to prioritize safety, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and community partnerships that incorporate racial equity factors in Department of Transportation grant and loan programs as a selection criterion.

Commented [SD1]: Is a word missing here?
For example, should there be something like "services" or "on-demand services" before "for"?
(there seems to be some sort of typo)

Commented [SD2]: Should this be capitalized?
Example:
<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/LRTP.aspx>

ⁱ Sarah Kaufman, Alexander Shermansong, and Nicholas Cowan, 2022. The Pink Tax on Mobility: Opportunities for Innovation. NYU Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management, 2021. Accessed at: <https://wagner.nyu.edu/impact/research/publications/pink-tax-mobility-opportunities-for-innovation>

ⁱⁱ Kristine M. Williams, Tia Boyd, Yaye Keita, and Jeff Kramer. The Transportation Equity Toolkit. USF Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.cutr.usf.edu/2021/09/transportation-equity-toolkit/>